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What Is Claimed Is:

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- 1. A method for removing fluid from the intestinal tract of a host by directly delivering an effective amount of water-absorbent polymer to the intestinal tract.
- 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer is enterically coated and the method of deliver is oral administration.
- 3. The method of claim? wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least about 10 times its weight in physiological caline.



- 4. The method of claim 3 wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least 20 times its weight in physiological saline.
- 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least 30 times its weight in physiological saline
- 6. The method of claim 5 wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least 40 times its weight in physiological saline.
- 7. The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer is formed by polymerizing acrylate containing monomers.
- 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer is formed by polymerizing monomer comprising acrylic acid or salts thereof.
 - 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer is a polysaccharide.
- 10. The method of claim 1 wherein the polymer includes functional groups for selectively absorbing blood borne waste products.
- 11. The method of claim 10 wherein the polymer includes functional groups for selectively absorbing urea.
- 12. The method of claim 10 wherein the polymer includes functional groups for selectively absorbing phosphate.



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- 13. The method of claim 2 wherein the enteric coating selected from at least one of: hydroxypropylmethylcellulose, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose phthalate, methacrylic acid polymers, or polymers of derivatives of methacrylic acid.
- 14. The method of claim 2 wherein the polymer is placed within an enterically coated capsule.

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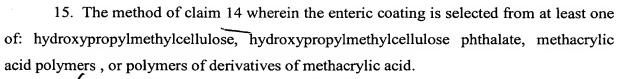
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16/ A method for treating fluid overload states in a host by directly delivering an effective amount of a water-absorbent polymer to the intestinal tract.

- 17. The method of claim 16 wherein the polymer is enterically coated and the method of delivery is oral administration.
- 18. The method of claim 16 wherein the fluid overload state is selected from at least one of: edema, congestive heart failure, ascites, and renal insufficiency.
- 19. A composition for removing fluid from the intestinal tract of a host comprising an enterically coated, non-systemic, non-toxic, water-absorbing polymer capable of absorbing at least 10 times its weight in physiological saline.
- 20. The composition of claim 19 wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least 20 times its weight in physiological saline.
- 21. The composition of claim 20 wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least 30 times its weight in physiological saline
- 22. The composition of claim 21 wherein the polymer is capable of absorbing at least 40 times its weight in physiological saline.
- 23. The composition of claim 19 wherein the polymer is formed by polymerizing acrylate containing monomers.
- 24. The composition of claim 19 wherein the polymer is formed by polymerizing monomer comprising acrylic acid or salts thereof.
 - 25. The composition of claim 19 wherein the polymer is a polysaccharide.
- 26. The composition of claim 19 wherein the polymer is a crosslinked polyally amine
 - 27. The composition of claim 19 wherein the polymer is provided in bead form.

